僕のあの子

柚谷晴日

僕のあの子[前編]

YUP.
DID YOU SERIOUSLY JUST DUMP SAKASHITA-SAN FROM CLASS B?!
Amai kura!!
I'VE GOT AKI-CHAN, AFTER ALL
She's a total hottie
DUMPING SAKASHITA-SAN LIKE THAT...
YOU'RE AN IDIOT!
Shut up!!
SURP
THERE IT IS. CHI-GUSA'S FIANCEE STORY
GEEZ, REALLY?
tap
I'M JUST THINKING OF THE GIRL I LOVE WITH ALL MY HEART
A FIANCEE YOU'VE NEVER EVEN MET!
THAT GIRL'S YOUR WHOLE PROBLEM!

When I was little... my mother gave me this picture...
THIS IS YOUR FIANCEE, CHIGUSA!
YOU'RE GOING TO GET MARRIED!
I'M GONNA MARRY THIS PERSON!
...and I fell in love.
RIGHT?
THAT'S RIGHT...
I.....
rustle
Next year...
...she'll turn 16, and we'll meet in person... and then I'll fall in love for the second time...!
Then our feelings will synchronize and it'll just be beautiful, no doubt about it!
I just know it!!
Dream all you like
AND WHAT'S WITH YOU NOT BEING ABLE TO MEET UNTIL YOU TURN 16?
THEIR MOTHERS DECIDED IT APPARENTLY
WAIT-- AREN'T YOU ALREADY 16?
AKI-CHAN'S ONE YEAR YOUNGER THAN ME SO WE'LL MEET NEXT YEAR!
WHAT?!
WELL YOU CERTAINLY SEEM TO BE ENJOYING YOURSELF...

BUT I JUST DON'T GET HOW YOU CAN BE SO SERIOUS...
IT'S A GIRL YOU'VE NEVER MET, ONLY SEEN IN A PICTURE...
WHAT IF YOU MEET HER AND SHE'S A TOTAL DOG?
Smacker
Or her personality sucks?
SHE'LL BE REALLY CUTE!!
And really nice bro
Is it really that strange...
...to fall in love with someone you've never met...?
I mean, if I could meet her...
...then of course I'd want to...

TOMORROW--
--AKI-CHAN'S COMING!!
POP
POP
HUH?
.....
Dad's was in on this surprise...
I KNOW IT'S REALLY SUDDEN...
NACCHAN'S BEING TRANSFERRED OVERSEAS FOR HER JOB
BUT AKI-CHAN WANTS TO STAY IN JAPAN, IT SEEMS

...I guess that promise wasn't really that big a deal then huh...
WHAT'S A YEAR OR TWO TOO EARLY MATTER?
SO I SUGGESTED WE TAKE HER IN INSTEAD!
THERE'S NO WAY I WOULDN'T BE HAPPY
AREN'T YOU HAPPY?
WHAT IS IT?
to meeting the real thing for so long
I'll help, too
WHY DON'T YOU TAKE AKI-CHAN'S THINGS TO MEI'S ROOM?
CAN I DO ANY-THING TO HELP?
After all, I've been looking forward...

FLUMP
Maybe I get some roses and a horse
Roses? A horse?
MAYBE I SHOULD'VE WORN A SKIRT AFTER ALL...
DON'T DO THAT--IT DOESN'T LOOK GOOD ON YOU!
The next day...
sleep-deprived
STILL AKI-CHAN'S LATE...
SHE MIGHT BE LOST...
I'LL CHECK AROUND NEARBY FOR HER!
!
EH? BUT
IT'LL BE FINE!
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT SHE LOOKS LIKE EVEN--
I've been looking at that photo for years...
I'LL BE ABLE TO TELL IT'S THE FACE OF THE GIRL I LOVE IMMEDIATELY!
OPEN...

.....
AMA-KURA-SAN ?
BA-DUMP
HUH?
OH, YEAH...
YES?

step...
YES
I'M NARUSE
N-NO! IT'S ANOTHER GUEST!
IS THAT AKI-CHAN?
UWAH!
CRAP! I LET MY-SELF GET CAUGHT UP STARING AT A DUDE!
NARUSE AKI
I HEARD FROM MY MOTHER.
I'LL BE STAY-ING HERE STARTING TODAY
...I apologize for being late
Huh?
Aki chan?
Huh?
Umm, my Aki-chan looks like a man for some reason...

STAMPEDE
ISN'T THIS WONDERFUL, CHIGUSA?!
HUH?!
Son...
AKI-CHAN, I'M AFRAID MY SON'S A HANDFUL BUT PLEASE TAKE CARE OF HIM!
OWOWOW!!
OWOWOW!!
WHA--
KYA!!!
SQUEEZE
Who cares if he's a boy?!
He's a total STUD~
Look t the amazing fiancee you get!!
OH! WE'LL NEED TO SWITCH ROOMS SINCE YOU'RE A BOY!
CHIGUSA, SHOW HIM TO YOUR ROOM!
ohoho~
I'VE GOT TO MAKE A BIG FEAST FOR TONIGHT!
toddle
toddle
...a little weird?
...isn't this...
Mom...

Let's set aside that bit with my mom for now
I'm sure she was joking
LET'S TRY AND GET ALONG, KAY?
YOU CERTAINLY DON'T SEEM HAPPY
...he's sharp.
SO... YOU'RE GONNA BE SHARING A ROOM WITH ME...
Well, it's not like it's his fault
OH, I DON'T MIND
ARE YOU SURE I'M NOT A BOTHER?
MOVING STUFF
...to make this work.
I mean, I know fully well that it's not his fault...
THAT'S NOT IT.
This guy.
WELL MY MOM AND MEI SEEM TO BE HAPPY...
We've got...
AND YOU?

I JUST...
But I've loved him for so long...
...WAS SURPRISED
WELL
I'LL ADMIT I HAD NO IDEA YOU'D BE A GUY EITHER, BUT DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT
CREAK
THE WHOLE ENGAGEMENT WAS SOMETHING OUR PARENTS DECIDED ON THEIR OWN, SO IT WAS WEIRD FROM THE START
So mean...
WE COULDN'T POSSIBLY BE EXPECTED TO FALL IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE WE'D NEVER MET. AND THERE WAS NO TELLING HOW WE'D GET ON AFTER MEETING
I'M NOT [redacted] HOW DELUSIONAL OUR PARENTS WERE
...It's like he's refuting everything I believe in...
THIS REALLY IS SUCH A PAIN
Straight from the horse's mouth..
So I..
ISN'T THAT HOW YOU FELT, TOO?
shouldn't have had a dream...?

I'M GONNA MARRY THIS PERSON!
I
WAY
I DON'T FEEL THAT WAY AT ALL!
I WAS SERIOUSLY IN LOVE WITH YOU!!
!
MY MOM
...SAID YOU WERE MAKING GREAT GRADES AT THIS HIGH-CLASS SCHOOL...
SO I WORKED HARD TO GET IN THE TOP SO IN MY CLASS
AND WHEN I HEARD YOU WERE GOOD AT SPORTS I TOOK UP JOGGING EVERY DAY
WHEN I HEARD YOU WERE TALL
I DRANK SO MUCH MILK MY STOMACH GOT LIKE THIS!
WOW.
Not that it helped!
thick
I'VE ALWAYS...

I LOVED YOU.
ALL THIS TIME...
SO LONG...
WORKED HARD...
TO BECOME A MAN WORTHY OF YOU!
THANK YOU!
!
Cr-crap! What am I babbling?!
And in front of the guy!
He definitely thinks I'm weird now!
Or maybe even creepy!
Yup absolutely gonna be awkward now!
SFX: FLAILING WILDLY

You
YOU CAN LAUGH IF YOU WANT
This is horrible
WHY WOULD I DO THAT?
YOU MADE ME HAPPY
THOUGH YOU DID CATCH ME OFF GUARD.
blush
!
'CHIGUSA' WAS IT?
y yeah
HUH ...?
He doesn't think I'm disgusting...?
NICE STRAIGHT-FORWARD LIKE THAT...
I LIKE IT.
TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOU, AND ME.
I WANT YOU TO FEEL THAT WAY ABOUT ME, TOO.
He's not laughing?

Aki-chan... is a completly different person from what I expected...
...but he's definitely a good person.
I WANT...
...YOU TO FALL IN LOVE WITH ME LIKE YOU DID WITH 'AKI-CHAN'.
SORRY TO MAKE YOU TALK FOR SO LONG WITH ME...

NICE GUY!
RE--REALLY?
THAT'S GOOD!
IT'S FINE, IT WAS FUN.
YOUR GRADUATION ESSAY WAS INTERESTING.
WELL THEN I'M GONNA TURN OUT THE LIGHTS
NIGHT!
SURE.
GOOD NIGHT.

SIT UP
WAITWAITWAIT WHAT ARE YOU DOING OVER HERE?!
YOU SAW ME GET OUT THE FU-TON!
POINT!
futon!
!?

smile...
I'M FINE MOVING IF YOU CAN'T SLEEP UNLESS IT'S IN A BED...
NAH.
THAT'S NOT IT...
EH?
WE'RE ENGAGED AFTER ALL RIGHT?
IT'S FINE IF WE SLEEP TOGETHER.
.....
.....
=DUMP=
Day 5
Tha--
Day 2
I guess he's right.
Oh yeah...
--TS
NOT RIGHT AT ALL!
Don't get carried away, me!
Oh yeah...
SIT UP
Day 7

He's gone!!
A...
...KI?
AKI!!
AKI-CHAN YOU'RE SO GOOD AT COOKING!
LIKE IRON CHEF!
You like Chinese?
$12.2!!
$12.2!!
HUH
AKI!!
I'VE ALWAYS WANTED SOMETHING LIKE THIS!
KYAA!!
THAT'S AMAZING, AKI-CHAN!
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU COULD DO PATCHWORK!
HUH
SFX: SLAM OPEN
This time for sure
AKI!!
!!
HM?
Taking a Bath
S--SORRY TO IN-TRUDE!
YOU WANT TO GET IN TOGETHER?
N-NO NO, THAT'S FINE...

SFX: BONK
I DON'T FEEL THAT WAY
THIS IS SIMPLY TRAINING TO BE A BRIDE
ゴッ
WITH THE COOKING AND THE SEWING AND STUFF...
AND THIS, TOO.
ACTING LIKE YOU'RE A FREE-LOADER...
DO YOU FEEL LIKE A MOOCHER OR SOMETHING?
YOU... WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
WASHING YOUR BACK.
NOT THAT.
THEN WHAT?
A... BRIDE?
ARE YOU GETTING HITCHED TO SOMEONE?
wobble
I'M YOUR FIANCE
YOU BEEN WORKING HARD THIS WHOLE TIME FOR MY SAKE...
.....
tighten...
NOW IT'S MY TURN TO DO THE SAME FOR YOU
YOU...

SFX. HUG TIGHT
YOU'RE SUCH A GREAT GUY!!
AH!
I GOT SUDS ON YOUR CLOTHES!
I CAN JUST CHANGE
IT'S FINE
THAT'S MY AKI-CHAN!
SFX. SIT UP
THIS IS DEFINITELY WEIRD!!
How many times has this been?!
Wait
WELL THEN
kiss
GOOD NIGHT

Again?
DO YOU HATE ME OR SOMETHING?
THAT'S NOT IT--BUT YOU'RE NOT AKI-CHAN!
HE NOTICED!
Though you're the same
THEN IF YOU'RE SO ADAMANT, SHALL WE DISSOLVE THE ENGAGEMENT?
I DON'T MIND IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT TO DO
I DON'T...
IT'S JUST THAT THIS RELATIONSHIP IS WEIRD RIGHT NOW!
I'VE GOT TO SAY SOMETHING TO GET OUT OF THIS SITUATION...!
WH--WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?!
THAT MAKES IT SOUNDS LIKE I WANT OUT JUST BECAUSE AKI-CHAN'S A MAN!
tremble
tremble
tremble

Why did...
...Huh?
I just
...WANT THAT!
Wait, no!
I take it back!
A-
Ki-
Nn...
Ngh!
kiss
Ah
suck
kiss
Ngh...
huff
I DONT
...WANT IT BI-THER.

AKI, WAI--
WAIT A MIN--
IT'S FINE...
How the hell is this 'fine'?!
I'M SERIOUS!
KNOCK KNOCK
THIS IS REALLY-
CHI-CHAN!!
Ngh
Ah!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND MY HOMEWORK!
.....
WE'LL HAVE TO CONTINUE LATER...
Y--
TOO BAD
tremble
tremble
YOU
I'LL GO CHECK HER HOMEWORK
YOU'RE NOT EXACTLY IN ANY CONDITION TO DO SO ANYWAYS
GOOD NIGHT
GOOD NIGHT...

I guess
Chi-kun!
because he's 'Aki-chan' originally?
CHI-GUSA!
CLASS IS LONG OVER!
AH...
WHY'D I GO AND SAY 'I DON'T WANT THAT'...?
WHAT THE HECK WAS THAT...?
IT'S NOT LIKE I'VE FORGOTTEN WHAT HAPPENED YESTERDAY
AKI-CHAN AGAIN?
YEAH
I WAS WONDERING WHEN I SHOULD BRING IT UP...
HUH?
AKI-CHAN CAME, RIGHT?
H--HOW DID YOU KNOW?!
I'M YOUR CHILDHOOD PAL!
YOUR MOM TOLD ME WHEN I BUMPED INTO HER YESTERDAY!
REALLY?
WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY ANYTHING?
NOT AS HOT AS YOU IMAGINED?
NAH, SHE'S GORGEOUS.
Frustratingly so
SHE'S NICE.
At least I think
GOT A BAD PERSONALITY, THEN?
STAND

Ooh!
Awesome!!
THEN DON'T TELL US--YOU HIT THE JACKPOT?!
.....
I KNEW THEY'D REACT LIKE THIS...
Dammit!!
HAHA HAHA HA!!
Good for you!
mutter
SHE'S A GUY.
THAT'S CHIGUSA FOR YOU!
WHAT A LET-DOWN!
EHAHA HAHA HAHA!

OH?
CHIGUSA! YOUR FIANCE'S HERE
SERI-OUSLY?!
HUH?!

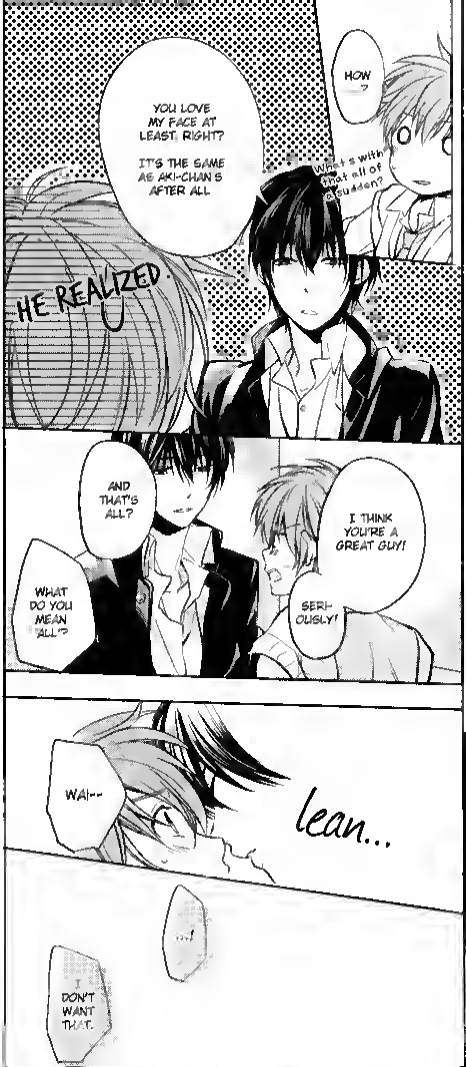
He's a looker
So that's Ak-chan??
Ak-chaaan
And don't say you're my fiance
Why not?
WHAT ABOUT SCHOOL?
AK!!!
I THOUGHT WE COULD WALK HOME TOGETHER.
IT ENDED EARLY
Those guys

SEE YA, AKI-CHAN!
OI! CHI-GUSA!
INTRO-DUCE HIM!
LET'S GO!!
HM?
HOW'S YOUR NEW SCHOOL?
I DON'T FEEL LIKE SMILING AT PEOPLE I DON'T LIKE
BUT YOU SMILE ALL THE TIME WITH ME
...
ANY WAYS, EARLI-ER.
EVERY-ONE'S NICE
THOUGH IT'S A PAIN WITH EVERY-ONE STARING AT ME ALL THE TIME
WELL TRY TO GET ALONG WITH THEM, OKAY?
WHY?
ARE WE FAMOUS OR SOMETHING?
BAH.

I...I WAS ALWAYS BRAGGING ABOUT MARRYING YOU ONE DAY...
SORRY.
SO THEN... EVERYONE THINKS WE'RE A COUPLE?
snicker
NO--- THAT'S NOT IT!
I MADE SURE TO CORRECT THEM!

AFTER ALL THE ONE I LOVE IS AKI-CHAN
NOT YOU, YOU KNOW?
...I SEE...
After that...

Aki didn't say a word...
all the way home...
It's so awkward
Did I say something to upset him ? Did he really hate that my classmates were making a fuss ?
Wh...what should I do?
Maybe I'll try to strike up a conversation...
AKI! CHECK IT OUT!
IT'S A PICTURE OF YOU I DREW IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL!
I ACTUALLY GOT FIRST PRIZE WITH IT, AND---
CHIGUSA


HOW...
YOU LOVE MY FACE AT LEAST, RIGHT?
IT'S THE SAME AS AKI-CHAN'S AFTER ALL
What's with that all of a sudden?
HE REALIZED
AND THAT'S ALL?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN 'ALL'?
I THINK YOU'RE A GREAT GUY!
SERIOUSLY
WAI--
lean...
...!
I DON'T WANT THAT.
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT ME?

SHOCK
NGH...
My heart's racing
slide
Wait no This feeling is...
NO!
I'm scared to look Aki in the face...
AKI...?
LOOK AT ME MORE,
CHIGUSA
YOU...
...AREN'T AKI-CHAN!
BUT AKI...
IS ME, YOU KNOW?
.....
I'M SORRY
SHUT

AKI-CHAN!
AKI-CHAN! LET'S GO TO THE PARK!
It's different from my feelings for Aki-chan
Those feelings aren't wavering at all
WHY'D HE MAKE THAT FACE...?
pick up
THE ONE I LOVE
...IS THIS PERSON.

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